



Drawn to a career in design

Name and age: Keece Warnock (39)
 Occupation: Architectural designer

STAFF REPORTER

Q What jobs did you do before this one?

A I had various jobs while growing up and studying, including market gardening, retail sales and building. After study, I was draughting for mechanical engineering firms, then moved to contract draughting before starting my own architectural design company.

Q Why did you choose this job?

A I have always enjoyed drawing and had a particular talent for it at school. I love design and enjoy the challenge of turning clients' ideas into reality.

Q How did you get into it and when?

A I basically worked hard at my studies and did my time as a draughtsman. I took the plunge into working on contract to several companies until I built up my own client base that led me to start my company in 2001.

Q What qualifications and training did you need?

A I did a three-year architectural draughting diploma and New Zealand certificate in architectural draughting, then became a professional member of Architectural Designers New Zealand (ADNZ) and finally a licensed building practitioner (LBP).

Q What personal skills do you need?

A You need to have good communication skills and the ability to deal with a wide range of personalities. Good time-management and the ability to deal with the pressure of high client expectations

Q Are there any physical requirements?

A It's not a physical job as such, but you do need to get around building sites and crawl under, in and through houses on occasions. There are also long periods sitting behind a computer, which can take its toll.

Q And what do you do on a daily basis?

A With my role in the company, I mainly deal with clients and the design process. I ensure clients get the design they desire, then work to ensure the documentation is produced for them to get through the consent and build process.

Q What is the most challenging aspect of the job?

A I think the biggest challenge is producing a design for our clients that meets or exceeds their expectations but also fits within their budget, a budget which at times is unrealistic. We get, on occasions, clients who have million-dollar taste with half-million-dollar budgets.

Q What is the most interesting assignment you've had?

A We have done hundreds of interesting jobs, but a couple that stand out were turning shipping containers into a building and the Gardens Medical Centre upgrade, which involved building the upper floor of the building in the car park next door then craning it on to the top of the lower floor.

Q What are the particular health and safety issues in your industry?

A There are not too many issues that I am aware of. I guess you need to keep fit outside work hours due to the fact you are sitting down for the most part. Also you need to be careful around building sites.

Q How has the job changed since you started?

A The amount of detailing required for building now has changed dramatically over the past 10 years, mainly due to the leaky home crisis that raised its ugly head in the early 2000s. The building code was then changed significantly in 2004 and the licensing scheme was introduced. When I compare a set of consent documents we do today to what we did in, say, 2004, there would be at least four times more drawings in the set.

Q What's something people generally don't know about the job?

A I guess the biggest question I get

A about being an architectural designer is "what is the difference between what an architectural designer does and what an architect does?" and the answer to that is not much. Architectural designers are able to do everything an architect can; the only thing they can't do is call themselves an "architect".

Q What are the highlights of the job?

A Seeing the joy in clients when they finally have their home built and the pride you have that you played a significant part in bringing their dream to life.

Q And what are the low points of the job?

A Pressure. Pressure to produce a great design on time and to a client's budget.

Q What's the strangest thing you've had to do?

A I don't really have anything strange that stands out but we do deal with some strange ideas from clients on what their house should look like.

Q And what is the salary?

A Well, that varies a lot depending if you are self-employed or working for a company and what size that company is. So it could range anywhere from \$80,000 to \$150,000 a year.

Q Where will you be 10 years from now?

A Hopefully, still working here in Outram with my family.



By design . . . Architectural designer Reece Warnock, owner of Warnock Architecture Ltd, sits in his Outram office.

PHOTO: LINDA ROBERTSON

To be asked

If you were not doing this job, what would you be doing?

Not sure, maybe building or engineering.

What did you want to be when you were 10?

A truck driver.

What should 10-year-olds aspire to today?

Being hard-working and respectful.

Name one thing you would change about your job?

Time pressure.

Do you get weekends and public holidays off?

Yes.